DESCRIPTION: This course will consider the fundamentals of Christian Theology through the lens of a 21st Century understanding of the Universe and the place of Humans within it. Based on Scripture and Tradition and through texts, lecture and class discussion the course will attempt to answer the following critical questions:

a. Who is God and what is God’s relationship to Creation and Humanity?
b. Who is Jesus and what does Jesus reveal about God, Creation and Humans?
c. How have Christian believers interacted with and expressed their real experience of God across history.

REQUIRED TEXTS


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

a. Reading of all assigned materials and participation in class discussions
b. Optional but highly recommended Extra Credit Lecture Reaction Papers ***
c. Five 1.5 page Written Studies
d. Mid-Term Exam: THURSDAY February 28 (IN CLASS multiple choice and essay)
e. 2.5 page New Testament Analysis THURSDAY March 13
f. Christian Development Group Project
g. Term Paper (7-8 pages) Paper Outline and Preliminary Bibliography due April 1: Completed Paper due: April 24**
h. Course Part II Exam (IN CLASS MULTIPLE CHOICE): May 1.
i. Final Exam: cumulative oral – individual appointments during final exam week.

** Paper and Project Guidelines:

a. **The Five Written Studies** will each consist of an answer to a question pertaining to a section of the Edwards text. The student will also compose three mock multiple choice exam questions covering the major theses of each section of the reading. Instructions and questions on last page of this syllabus.

b. **The New Testament Analysis** will be an application of methods of New Testament study to selected biblical texts. This research will support a group discussion on the ministry of Jesus.

c. **The Christian Development Group Presentation** Each group mentioned in ‘b’ will develop a 15 minute class lecture/creative presentation on a section of the Prusak text. The presentation will include a handout study guide and a 5 question multiple choice quiz at the presentation conclusion.

d. **The Term paper** will present a contemporary cultural theme and will bring this theme INTO DIALOGUE with the course material. The topic will be selected by the student and approved by the instructor. **The Term paper** should present a coherent theme, clear organization and flow of ideas from Introduction to Conclusion, careful citing of positions taken through footnotes,
demonstrated mastery of the various issues involved with the topic, especially as these issues relate to the Christian view of Creation explored in this class, and a well presented and informed personal opinion on the topic addressed. Questions regarding sources, substance or interpretation are welcomed during my office hours.

GRADING

*The five written studies and in-class mid-term are the first half of the course and will comprise 1/3 of the grade. The New Testament Analysis, Group Project and Part II Exam are the second half of the course and will comprise 1/3 of the grade. The Term Paper and cumulative oral exam are the Final Exam and will comprise 1/3 of grade.

ATTENDANCE

… will be taken. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade. University policy specifies that first year students “will receive a grade of XF (failure) whenever s/he has been absent unexcused once more than double the number of weekly meetings of the course.” (translates into 5 unexcused absences for this course).

ACADEMIC HONESTY

It is expected that students are familiar with the university’s academic honesty guidelines.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Villanova seeks to make reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability, please contact me outside of class, and make arrangements to register with the Learning Support Office (95636; nancy.mott@villanova.edu).

OFFICE HOURS

Mondays: 12-2pm; Thursdays 1:30-3:00. Other times by appointment
Office location: St. Rita’s Hall Room 114
Office phone: 610-519-4089
Email: don.giannella@villanova.edu
PART I

INTRODUCTION

January 15: Introduction/Definitions/Pre-suppositions… Theology/Science; Theology/Religion
SCHILLEBEECKX HANDOUT GIVEN

January 17: How do Christians situate God in relation to Humanity? How is Society related to the individual Person and what does this have to do with God?
Read: handout: Schillebeeckx; Edwards pp. 1-6

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN VIEWS ON GOD’S RELATION TO CREATION AND HUMANS

January 22: The Origin of Universe expressed through The Biblical Story of Creation
Read: Genesis 1-3; Edwards pp. 7-17
Write: Study 1

January 24: The relationship between God and the Universe, Humanity, and all creatures expressed through the Book of Genesis; ‘Theodicy’
Read: Genesis 4-12; Edwards pp. 18-26

Read: Edwards pp. 27-39
Write: Study 2

January 31: The Work of the Spirit of God (continued): Deep Incarnation and Jesus as the ‘Wisdom of God’
Read: Edwards pp. 39-64; Wisdom 3:1-12

February 5: God’s Relationship with the Universe expressed as ‘Trinity’
Read: Edwards pp. 65-81
Write: Study 3

February 7: The Meaning of Jesus – Redemption as the fulfillment of God’s Plan for Creation
Read: Edwards pp. 82-98

February 12: Understanding Jesus within a Developing Community of Belief
Trinitarian and Christological Developments
Read: Wright pp. 14-33
Write: Study 4

CHRISTIANITY BEGINS IN THE HISTORICAL PERSON: JESUS OF NAZARETH

February 14: Who Do YOU Say that I am? Truth or Heresy
Read: Wright: pp. 96-125
CHURCH COUNCILS HANDOUT GIVEN

February 19: Introduction to Christian Scriptures; Presuppositions
Write: Study 5
NEW TESTAMENT INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT GIVEN
February 21: Who did the Early Believers say that he is?
Read:
  a. Mark 1: Matthew 1:4-11; Luke 1:4-13; John 1

February 26: Jesus’ Self Awareness and Mid-Term Review

February 28: MID TERM EXAM

BREAK

Part II
March 11: Mid-Term Exam Return/Review; Begin: The Jesus who lived in History
Read: Wright pp. 34-53
GROUP PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS GIVEN

March 13: NEW TESTAMENT ASSIGNMENT DUE. PLEASE BRING TWO CLEAN COPIES TO CLASS. Retrieving the Words and Deeds of Jesus
  **Group 1A and 1B**
  Mk 2:1-3:12 (Mt 9:1-12:16; Lk 5:17-6:19)
  Mt 11:2-19; Lk 7:18-35
  Lk 15:1-32 (Mt 18:12-14)
  Mk 7:1-23 (Mt 15:1-20; Lk 11:37-41)
  Lk 18:9-14
  Jn 7:53-8:11

  **Group 2A and 2B**
  Mk 4:1-20 (Mat 13:1-23; Lk 8:4-15)
  Mt 20:1-16
  Lk 17:7-10
  Lk 10:29-37
  Mk 4:30-32 (Mt 13:31-33; Lk 13:18-21)
  Mt 4:24-7:29; Lk 6:17-7:1 (Mk 1:21-22)

  **Group 3A and 3B**
  Mt 12:22-30; Lk 11:14-23 with Mk 3:22-27; compare Mt 9:32-34
  Mt 8:5-13; Lk 7:1-10 with Jn 4:46-54

March 18: Holy Week

MARCH 20: EASTER BREAK NO CLASSES

March 25: The Jesus who lived in History (continued)
  Jesus and the Kingdom of God
  Read: Wright pp. 54-73

March 27: The Death of Jesus: What Happened?
Read: Wright pp. 74-95
  Mk 11:1-33; Mt 21:1-27; Lk 19:28-20:8; Jn 12:12-19; Jn 2:13-22

April 1: The Resurrection of Jesus
Read: Wright pp. 126-149

TERM PAPER TOPICS, OUTLINES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
THE BELIEVERS INTERPRET AND LIVE THE MEMORY AND MESSAGE OF JESUS

April 3: The Message and the Believers interact with the culture of the first and Second Millennium
Read: Prusak pp. 9-63

April 8: Group 3A: Shaping the Early Church, Prusak pp. 70-119
Group 3B: The Jesus Movement as a Communion of Churches, Prusak pp. 120-175

April 10: Group 2A: A Changing Church, Prusak pp. 176-228
Group 2B: The Birth of Ecclesiology, Prusak pp. 229-269

April 15: Group 1A: Toward a ‘New Order of Things,’ Prusak pp. 270-312
Group 1B: Restoring a Future to a World Church and Epilogue, Prusak pp. 313-341

April 17: Christian Practice: Worship in Relationship to World/World present in Worship
Read: Edwards pp. 99-118
ORAL FINAL EXAM APPOINTMENT SIGN UPS: Please bring your Full Exam Schedule to class.

April 22: God, Jesus, Creation Part I -- Issues and Answers
BRING: CONTEMPORARY ISSUE
Read: Wright pp. 174-197

April 24: God, Jesus, Creation Part II – Second Half of Course Review
TERM PAPERS DUE
Read: Edwards: pp. 119-123

April 29: No Class, Friday Class Schedule

May 1: PART II EXAM, God, Jesus, Creation Part III – Some or All? ## CATS EVALUATION
(THIS CLASS WILL TAKE THE WHOLE PERIOD)

FINAL EXAM APPOINTMENTS WILL BE ARRANGED. Schedule will be arranged in class April 17) by seniority/alpha order. Seven minute individual appointments will be arranged during the following times: Saturday May 3: 6:30pm-9pm; Monday, May 5: Noon-4pm in my office, St. Rita’s Hall Room 114. There is NO traditional two hour sit down written exam.

During the Final Exam appointment, in addition to answering a comprehensive question, your semester average will be reviewed and your final grade for the course will be given.
Theology Study Questions and Instructions

I: Format: The Written Study will be prepared on one page using double sided printing. Please use Times New Roman 12 point Font with one inch margins all around. Please put your name, date and THL1050-020 single spaced at the top right corner of the first page before beginning the answer.

a. When answering the question for each study, please use DOUBLE SPACING. Do not re-type the question. The answer should fill the first page and should not spill over to the second page. Please be concise and clear. When making an important assertion, please cite text support by putting page number in parentheses after your assertion. No need to put ‘Edwards’ or ‘Wright’ or ‘Schillebeeckx’ since each will be the only text support for your answer for any given assignment. When referring to Biblical text, please cite Book within Bible, Chapter and verse (Gn3:1-2). Short text quotes are permitted. Please, no block quotes.

b. On side two, please prepare three mock multiple choice exam questions. Each question should contain a main assertion followed by at least four options, three of which being stand-alone possibilities (ie. not ‘all of the above or none of the above, etc.) When preparing the mock multiple choice exam questions please use the following format and please be sure to underline the correct answer.

At Villanova, it is an acceptable custom to express deep connection and loving community among wandering groups of First Year students by sharing the following words:

a. Hey Guys
b. Hey, Hey, hey hey hey hey

c. Hey Losers
d. a. b. and c.
e. a. and b.

II: Written Study Questions and Due Dates: The answers are designed to demonstrate a mastery of the readings assigned through the due date (each assignment covers two class periods worth of readings)

a. **January 22**: According to Edwards, what does it mean to be ‘In the Image of God’ in the Christian Context and why is it difficult for ‘Western’ Christians to fully grasp Edwards’ understanding?

b. **January 29**: St. Irenaeus proclaims that the Word and the Spirit are the two hands of God. How might a contemporary theologian use this image to describe the Spirit working with and through Creation AND account for sin in Creation?

c. **February 5**: Richard of St. Victor offers a ‘friendship’ model when describing the Trinity. How does this model express the relationship between the Creator and Creation?

d. **February 12**: How does the term Redemption relate to the whole of Creation and what is Jesus Christ's role in Redemption?

e. **February 19**: What are the most important considerations for a thorough study of Jesus Christ and why?